

**R marks/Arguments:**

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1, 2, and 4-17 are now in the application. Claim 1 has been amended. Claim 3 has been cancelled. Claims 15 and 16 were previously withdrawn.

In item 2 on page 2 of the Office action, claims 1, 2, 5, 6, and 9-14 have been rejected as being obvious over Latz et al. (5,043,716) in view of applicant's admitted prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

The limitations of claim 3 have been added into claim 1 in order to overcome the rejection. It is believed to be proper to enter the amendment after final since no new issue requiring further search or consideration has been presented by merely incorporating the limitations of claim 3 into claim 1.

In item 3 on page 6 of the Office action, claims 3, 4, 7, 8, and 17 have been rejected as being obvious over Latz et al. (5,043,716) in view of Miller et al. (6,155,699) under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

Applicant has filed an affidavit under 37 CFR 1.131 to show that applicant was in possession of the invention on December 16, 1998, which is prior to March 15, 1999, the effective date of Miller et al.

Applicant showed due diligence by filing German application 199 18 370.8 on April 22, 1999 and PCT/DE00/01079 on April 7, 2000. Priority to these applications has been claimed.

A copy of the invention disclosure statement has been enclosed with this response. Since this invention disclosure statement is in German, a translation of pertinent portions of the invention disclosure statement has also been enclosed.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claim 1. Claim 1 is, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art and since all of the dependent claims are ultimately dependent on claim 1, they are believed to be patentable as well.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1, 2, and 4-17 are solicited.

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, he is respectfully requested to telephone counsel so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out. In the alternative, the entry of the amendment is requested as it is believed to place the application in better condition for appeal, without requiring extension of the field of search.

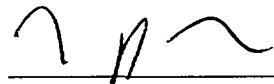
Petition for extension is herewith made. The extension fee for response within a period of one month pursuant to Section 1.136(a) in the amount of \$110.00 in accordance with Section 1.17 is enclosed herewith.

If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

Please charge any other fees which might be due with respect to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner and Greenberg, P.A., No. 12-1099.

Appl. No. 10/007,398  
Amdt. dated November 18, 2003  
Reply to Office action of 7/18/2003

Respectfully submitted,



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MPW:cgm

November 18, 2003

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